

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 01084 110827Z

15

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 SAJ-01 BIB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2188

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BELGRADE 1084

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT YO

SUBJ: AMENDMENTS TO SERBIAN LAW ON PUBLIC ORDER

REF: STATE 20637

1. AMENDMENTS MENTIONED REFTEL HAVE BEEN APPROVED IN SERBIAN ASSEMBLY AND ARE TO TAKE EFFECT WITHIN A FEW DAYS, ACCORDING TO MAR 10 BORBA. PENALTIES PROVIDED ARE LESS STIFF THAN JAN 29 POST ARTICLE IMPLIED. AMENDMENTS PERTAIN TO MISDEMEANOR (RATHER THAN FELONY) OFFENSES AGAINST PUBLIC LAW AND ORDER, WITH MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL PENALTY 4,000 ND (C. \$236) OR 60 DAYS IMPRISONMENT (FOR INSULTS TO "SOCIALIST-PATRIOTIC OR NATIONAL FEELINGS OF CITIZENS OR TO YUGOSLAV SOCIAL POLITICAL SYSTEM".)

2. NONETHELESS, LANGUAGE OF LAW ENCOMPASSES RATHER CONSIDERABLE RANGE OF ACTIONS. IT IS DIRECTED AGAINST "ANYONE WHO BY HIS BEHAVIOR HINDERS NORMAL WAY OF LIFE OF CITIZENS, THREATENS THEIR SECURITY, HAMPERS MOVEMENT OF PERSONS IN PUBLIC PLACES, CAUSES UNREST AMONG CITIZENS, VIOLATES PUBLIC MORALITY, OR IN ANY OTHER WAY VIOLATES SOCIAL DISCIPLINE OR PEACE OF CITIZENS" (AS NEW LAW IS QUOTED IN BORBA ARTICLE).

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PAGE 02 BELGRA 01084 110827Z

3. ONE TARGET STRESSED IN THE BORBA ARTICLE, IS THE UNRULY FOOTBAL (SOCCER) FAN, WHO FACES UP TO 30 DAYS AND \$120 FINE FOR A RANGE OF UNDISCIPLINED ACTIVITIES WHICH WOULD "VIOLATE THE PEACE AND SECURITY" OF CITIZENS. THIS PROVISION LIKELY IS THE RESULT OF A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, SOME OF WHICH HAVE TAKEN ON NATIONALIST OVERTONES, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED AT HOTLY-CONTESTED YUGOSLAV LEAGUE GAMES.

4. TAKEN AS A WHOLE, THE LAW DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE THE OMINOUS VEHICLE FOR REPRESSION OF EXPRESSION THAT IT EARLIER WAS RUMORED TO BE.
TOON

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